

RESPONSES TO VENDOR INQUIRIES

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

Solicitation TIRNO-07-R-00004

Entitled, "E-Payment"

Question 1: I had a question about this Epayment solicitation. Is it small business set aside or can any company respond?

Government's Response: The Government is not currently accepting responses to the RFI from any size business. We have not finalized the acquisition strategy for the RFP that will follow this RFI. We will be evaluating the responses received from the RFI to determine whether we will pursue a set-aside of some type or solicit using full and open competition procedures.

Question 2: In regard to the RFI, the following statement reads:

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code is 522320 and the size standard is \$6,500,000.

Is there a requirement that responding vendors have annual revenue of less than \$6,500,000.00?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 1.

Question 3: In regard to Bid #TIRNO-07-R-00004 (Request for Information re: Financial Transactions Processing), could you please provide me with an electronic copy of the RFI, or provide me with the website address where the RFI is posted?

Government's Response: The RFI can be found at www.fbo.gov. Go to Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, National Office Procurement. There are 2 postings denoted, both on October 18, 2007. Please reference Modification 0004 and W6W203TPR03. Both will direct you to <http://www.irs.gov/opportunities/procurement/article/0,,id=12537800.html>. where you will find both the Draft Statement of Work and the Section 508 Standards and Provisions. All updates will be posted at www.fbo.gov.

Question 4: The Statement of Work references “Credit Card Bulk Provider Requirements document (Section J, Attachment 2)”. Where can that document be found?

Government’s Response: The resultant solicitation document will encompass the Credit Card Provider requirements document as referenced in Section J.

Question 5: I have just received a copy of draft statement of work. Can you confirm the following:

- a) This is just a draft published for comment not actual solicitation.
- b) Comments are due by Oct 29, not the proposal response
- c) A final statement of work is forthcoming which will be basis for award.

Government’s Response:

a) Correct. This notice is a Request for Information Only. No solicitation document exists at this time. The RFI encompasses a “Draft” Statement of Work (SOW) and Section 508 Standards and Provisions as applicable to the Draft SOW.

b) Questions to the RFI were due no later than October 24, 2007. The established closing date for receipt of responses is revised to read November 2, 2007. Please see Fed Biz Opps posting of October 26, 2007 revising the due date for receipt of responses. The Government’s response to vendor inquiries will be posted on October 31, 2007 at www.fbo.gov.

c) The Government has not finalized the acquisition strategy for the Request for Proposal (RFP) that will follow this Request for Information (RFI). Pursuant to the Government’s review of the responses to the RFI, the acquisition strategy will be finalized. The Government will post the resultant solicitation document at www.fbo.gov for the respective E-Payment Services Project. This solicitation document shall include a “Final” Statement of Work.

Question 6: I am trying to find out if the potential requirement for E-payment is a new requirement or if an incumbent exists? If there is someone performing/performed this requirement could you please provide any of the following information: Name of the Contractor, the Contract Number, the Award/Expiration Date and Contract Value? Thank you very much for your help and have a great weekend.

Government's Response: The two (2) incumbents are Link2Gov Corporation and Official Payments Corporation. Any additional information may be obtained pursuant to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Question 7: The RFI references the following:

“Expansion shall include payment methods that do not require IRS to receive, process and store paper checks and money orders. This may include, but is not limited to, the acceptance of electronic fund transfers, intermediary conversion of paper checks and money orders to electronic transactions, or credit card transactions. “

Does this mean that the IRS is interested in responses that include on-line and IVR ACH transactions, in addition to Back Office Conversion of paper checks, lockbox, etc – in addition to credit card transaction processing?

Government's Response: The Government's objective, as stated in C.1.3, is to allow the private sector to use their creativity to identify and present approaches to electronic payment methods.

Question 8: Will the incumbent contracts TIRNO-02-C-00022 and TIRNO-02-C-00024 be extended past 11/30/07?

Government's Response: No determination has been made at this time.

Question 9: We are in the process of preparing the proposal and request letter for doing the same. Kindly advise me on how to go about. Please do the needful.

Government's Response: This is a Request for Information (RFI) ONLY. No solicitation document exists at this time. The Government is conducting a market survey to determine the acquisition strategy. To this end, we welcome interested parties participation (response) to the RFI. No solicitation document exists; therefore proposal submissions are not being requested at this time. However, responses in accordance with the Request for Information are welcome and are requested to be provided by the re-established closing date of November 2, 2007.

Question 10: Why is an RFI being issued prior to the release of the RFP?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 1.

Question 11: Must Offerors: a). Respond to the RFI and b). Meet the Government's minimum mandatory requirements contained in the Statement of Work (SOW) in order to be eligible to submit RFP proposal responses?

Government's Response:

a) No. This is a Request for Information (RFI) ONLY. Responses are welcome and are solely on a voluntary basis.

b) The resultant solicitation document/Request for Proposal (RFP) will set forth all the Government's requirements that must be met in order to be eligible for award.

Question 12: Will we be provided with a list of those Offerors who respond to the RFI? A list of those who qualify and a list of those who don't? If so, when could we expect to obtain these lists?

Government's Response: No listing of this nature is available.

Question 13: Section C.1. Statement of Work: The SOW contains several references to "Section J, Attachment 1 and Section J, Attachment 2". These attachments are missing from the RFI documentation. Is this information material to an Offeror's response to the RFI? If so, will it be provided?

Government's Response: Once the Government has completed the evaluation of the responses to the RFI to determine whether we will pursue a set-aside of some type or solicit using full and open competition procedures, the resultant solicitation document will encompass all the appropriate attachments as referenced in Section J.

Question 14: SOW Section C.1.2 Scope, second paragraph, last sentence, refers to "...., intermediary conversion of paper checks and money orders to electronic transactions, ...". There are a wide array of services that could be inferred from this description; from simple paper conversion to the provision of lockbox services. Please elaborate or be more specific as it pertains to this payment method.

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 7.

Question 15: SOW Section C.2 Minimum Mandatory Business Requirements: Section C.2.4 cites that all funds "must settle within 24 - 48 hours." Section C.2.5 states that "Funds must be available in the Contractor's designated bank account one business day after the settlement file is submitted." Since the provision of the settlement file, of necessity, is submitted on the day following the day that the payments are made, is the settlement requirement 24 - 48 hours following the payment date or 24 - 48 hours following the submission of the settlement file? Please clarify.

Government's Response: 24 - 48 hours following payment date.

Question 16: Section C.2.26 in the SOW states that, "Live customer service assistance shall be available, at a minimum, Monday through Friday, 7:00am to 7:00pm, local time. Please define "local time".

Government's Response: Local time is defined by awardee's time zone.

Question 17: The RFI fails to mention any reporting requirements such as daily and monthly transaction reports, chargeback reports, exception handling reports, incident reports, ad hoc reports, findings reports and marketing reports. Is this an oversight or a deliberate omission?

Government's Response: Once the acquisition strategy is finalized, the resultant solicitation will address this matter in its entirety.

Question 18: The RFI makes no reference to a requirement that the Contractor conduct an annual 24 hour production test of its back-up processing facility. Again, is this an oversight or an intentional omission?

Government's Response: Please see the answer to Question 17.

Question 19: In our September 27th response to an Electronic Payment Requirement Market Survey initiated by Tora Bunch on September 26th relating to the 508 Standard, we identified a number of provisions/applicable standards that did not apply to our IVR and Internet services and we responded accordingly. The Section 508 Standard component of the RFI requires that we identify a compliance level, e.g., full, partial, non-compliant. Is a "not applicable (N/A)" an acceptable response for the purpose of responding to the RFI and for award consideration? It is our opinion that an "N/A" response in this field should be considered an acceptable response for all potential Offerors.

Government's Response: The information provided in response to this Request for Information (RFI) will assist the IRS in establishing the availability of Section 508 compliant products and establish the level of compliance by the standard's provisions. The vendor should mark "N/A" when a particular standard or any provision under the standard isn't applicable. If a vendor believes the correct solution includes, and has identified EIT products, the vendor should identify the product, the standard, and the provisions (by level of compliance) as a response to the RFI (and "N/A", if the provision does apply). The IRS will use this Request for Information (RFI) to establish a Request for Proposal (RFP)/solicitation document.

Once the IRS has established requirements and issues the solicitation, proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria established within the RFP. Should the offeror be unable to meet the IRS' minimum requirements, the IRS will not consider the offeror's solution for award.

Question 20: How and when will Offerors' questions be published? Will Offerors' names be associated with their specific questions?

Government's Response: The question in response to vendor inquiries on the RFI will be posted at www.fbo.gov on Wednesday, October 31st. In responding the "questions and answers" (Q&A's) the source of a specific inquiry will not be divulged by the Government.

Question 21: Is there a regulation or law which prevents the IRS from paying fees to collect taxes?

Government's Response: Pursuant to the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 (IRS 6311(d)(2)), the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to enter into contracts to obtain services related to receiving payment by other means where cost beneficial to the Government. The Secretary may not provide any fee or provide any other consideration under such contracts. No U.S. Government appropriated or non-appropriated funds will be made available or utilized in performance any resultant contract/s.

Question 22: The RFI mentions that approximately 1.5 million payments were made by credit card in 2005. Do you have comparable data for 2006? Are volume projections available for the next couple of years (2008-2011)?

Government's Response:

2006 volume = approximately 2.1 million

Projected volume 2008 = 2.8 million

Projected volume 2009 = 3.1 million

Projected volume 2010 = 3.4 million

Projected volume 2011 = 3.6 million

Question 23: The RFI mentions that approximately 1.5 million payments were made by credit card in 2005. Do you have comparable data for 2006?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 22.

Question 24: Are volume projections available for the next couple of years (2008-2011)? Please see question 23.

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 22.

Question 25: There are references throughout the Statement of Work document to other documents which were not included in the package. Can the IRS supply these documents?

Examples include:

- Section J, Attachment 1
- Credit Card Bulk Provider Requirements document (Section J, Attachment 2)
- electronic payment regulations of the Internal Revenue Code, including Section 301.6311-2, Payment by credit card and debit card and any subsequent updates and revisions (Section J, Attachment 3).
- Section F, Schedule of Performance
- See Section H, Public Release of Information
- Section 508 Applicable Standards,(Section J, Attachment 4)

Government's Response: Once the Government has completed the evaluation of the responses to the RFI to determine whether we will pursue a set-aside of some type or solicit using full and open competition procedures, the resultant solicitation document will encompass all appropriate terms and conditions, as well as the applicable attachments as referenced in Section J.

Question 26: *C.1.2 states the primary objective of this SOW is to expand the use of electronic payment methods to collect federal tax payments and to encourage taxpayers to use electronic media to interact with the IRS.*

Please clarify if the primary goal of this procurement is to expand the acceptance of Credit and Debit Cards for tax payments. If not, please specify what other types of payments the IRS would envision collecting through this channel?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 7.

Question 27: *C.2.2 Refers to the "completion of federal payments only". However C.2.43 relates to both Federal/State electronic payments. Please clarify if the goal is to accept both federal and state tax payments?*

Government's Response: The solicitation is for Federal tax payments.

Question 28: *C. 2.13 / C.2.16 please provide further clarification on these requirements.*

Government's Response:

C.2.13 – The requirement is further explained in the Credit Card Bulk Provider Requirements document; which will be provided with resultant solicitation document/ Request for Proposal.

C.2.16 – The authorization date must be less than 11 days prior to the date the settlement file is forwarded to the TFA, otherwise the payment must be re-authorized.

Question 29: *C.2.14 Does this requirement require the IRS to supply current SSN/EIN data to the contractor?*

Government's Response: The requirement is further explained in the Credit Card Bulk Provider Requirements document; which will be provided with resultant solicitation document/ Request for Proposal.

Question 30: *C.2.2 States our solution should support international access. Do you require the contractor to accept non USD payments from overseas?*

Government's Response: No

Question 31: *C.2.26 Customer Service available Monday to Friday 7:00 am to 7:00 pm local time. Do you require availability across the CONUS to be 7:00am to 7:00pm local? Or just 7:00am to 7:00pm ET?*

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 16.

Question 32: Does "All funds must be settled within 24 – 48 hours" at number C.2.4 refer to the moment the transaction was authorized or from when the settlement file was sent?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 15.

Question 33: Is there a specific level of encryption required for web applications?

Government's Response: Please see requirement C.2.38 for referenced security guidelines.

Question 34: Is there a service level agreement (SLA) associated with the processing of payment transactions? For example, must all payment transactions complete in 20 seconds?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 27.

Question 35: Is there any rule governing how quickly charge-backs are processed?

Government's Response: Chargeback procedures will be provided to the successful offeror/s upon award of the Request for Proposal.

Question 36: In the event of a catastrophic system failure, is there a service level agreement (SLA) governing how quickly a backup system takes over the processing of payments?

Government's Response: Please see requirement C.2.36.

Question 37: Is the response to the RFI a requirement for participation for this solicitation?

Government's Response: See answer to question 11(a).

Question 38: Can you confirm that the requested solution is limited to submission of payment and does not include submission of tax forms?

Government's Response: The solicitation is for electronic payments options.

Question 39: Will the website/URL be available throughout the entire year, or is it for a fixed period of time?

Government's Response: Please see requirement C.2.22.

Question 40: **A.** C.2.4- Who is the TFA? Will it be another financial institution? **B.** By what mechanism should funds be settled through the TFA? **C.** All funds must settle in 24-48 hours. Is this time period for when the contractor initiates the transfer to the IRS, or from the point the payment is initiated by the individual/business to the point it is received by the IRS?

Government's Response:

- A. The current Treasury Financial Agent is Bank of America.
- B. Please see answer to Question 27.
- C. Please see answer to Question 15.

Question 41: There are several references to credit/debit card funded requirements (including c.2.13,14, 16, 17,19, 20). Can you confirm which funding vehicles the contractor can offer for submitting payments? Is it checking, savings, debit card?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 7.

Question 42: **A.** C.2.23- Can you describe what type of validity checks you are expecting for taxpayer info? **B.** When would entity rejection occur? Upon payment initiation or before providing the user with access to the payments system?

Government's Response:

- A.** Documentation relevant to this requirement will be provided to successful offerors upon award of the Request for Proposal.
- B.** Please see answer to Question 27.

Question 43: C.2.2 For international payers, is the contractor required to support payments from non-US checking accounts?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 28.

Question 44: C.2.7 Will different payment types (business, personal) need to have funds settle to different accounts?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 27.

Question 45: C.2.28 If the Contractor is holding funds and the TFA will be debiting its account, will the TFA be responsible for any penalties caused by delays?

Government's Response: Circumstances will be reviewed and addressed on a case by case basis.

Question 46: C.2.12 Can the convenience fee be changed at anytime during the life of the contract?

Government's Response: No acquisition strategy has been determined at this time.

Question 47: C.2.17 What additional payment information is required to be stored for 72 months?

Government's Response: If any additional payment information is required, it will be discussed pursuant to award.

Question 48: Will IVR and GUI language be limited to English only?

Government's Response: Please see requirement C.2.2.

Question 49: Is the response to the RFI a requirement for participation for this solicitation?

Government's Response: Please see answer to Question 34.

Question 50: I'm trying to access the solicitation at <http://www.procurement.irs.treas.gov> but the website doesn't appear. Is there another address where the document can be downloaded?

Government's Response: No solicitation document exists at this time. Please see answer to Question 3.

Question 51: We are in the process of preparing the proposal and request letter for doing the same. Kindly advise me on how to go about. Please do the needful.

Government's Response: No solicitation document exists at this time; therefore no "Request for Proposals" has been established. However, the Government welcomes interested parties to submit a "response" to this Request for Information (RFI) in order to assist the Government in making future acquisition decisions.